

Dear caregivers and families,

River East Transcona School Division acknowledges the recent tragic events taking place in Israel and Gaza. Please be assured that the safety and security of everyone in our schools is our priority.

Our division has welcomed students from across the world and we understand that situations such as this can have an impact on members of our community. News and information travel quickly in this digital age and it is not uncommon for people of all ages to have questions about challenging world events.

School is a safe place for everyone to be open and discuss what they are feeling. As always, school staff will provide additional support to those who may need it. If you notice your child is showing signs of distress, please contact their teacher to discuss.

Here are some ways to support your child at home:

- During challenging times, the reactions of adults will set the tone for children and youth.
- Be aware of your own emotions and reactions. Modelling calmness is helpful.
- Maintain regular, predictable routines.
- Validate the child or youth's reactions and questions ("That sounds really hard", "That's really sad").
- Listen to understand, not necessarily respond.
- Limit exposure to media coverage, in particular exposure to graphic images and descriptions.
- Start with what children and youth know- "What have you already heard?". Help them name some of their questions and fears/worries.
- Encourage artistic expression of emotion (painting, writing, dance, singing, etc.).
- Model and practice positive ways of coping with sadness, fear, anger, and worry.
- Offer patience. In times of stress, children and teens may have more challenges with their behaviour, concentration, and attention. Caregivers and teachers can offer additional patience, care, and love to children and to themselves.

Here are some additional resources that may be helpful:

- [How to talk to your children about conflict and war](#) (UNICEF)
- [How to talk to children and adolescents about war](#) (Anxiety Canada)
- Kids Help Phone (24/7): Text CONNECT to 686868
- Klinik Crisis Line (24/7): 204.784.4067
- EAP resources

We value the important partnership that River East Transcona School Division has with the families of our students.